

STOCK

ESSEX

Its History and Romance

A HISTORICAL SURVEY
of the VILLAGE



By

L. DONALD JARVIS

PRICE - THREE SHILLINGS



*With compliments
Donald Jarvis*

STOCK
—: ESSEX :—



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Donald Jarvis

PREFACE

THE compiling of this book has given me much pleasure, and I can conceive few more interesting hobbies than delving into the story of one's native village.

As far as I am aware, the only other history of Stock which has been written is "The Annals of Stock" published in 1914 by the late Rector, Rev. E. P. Gibson, B.A. I acknowledge my indebtedness to this book from which I have quoted indirectly, but at the same time I have endeavoured to confine my story of the village to those points which the "Annals of Stock" does not cover.

With regard to the chapter on the history of the Congregational Church, I have had access to all the documents and papers connected with the formation of this Church, and it is at the earnest request of many friends that I have included this chapter in the story of the village.

My thanks are tendered to all who have given me their valuable assistance in this work.

L. D. JARVIS.

Barnehurst, Kent.

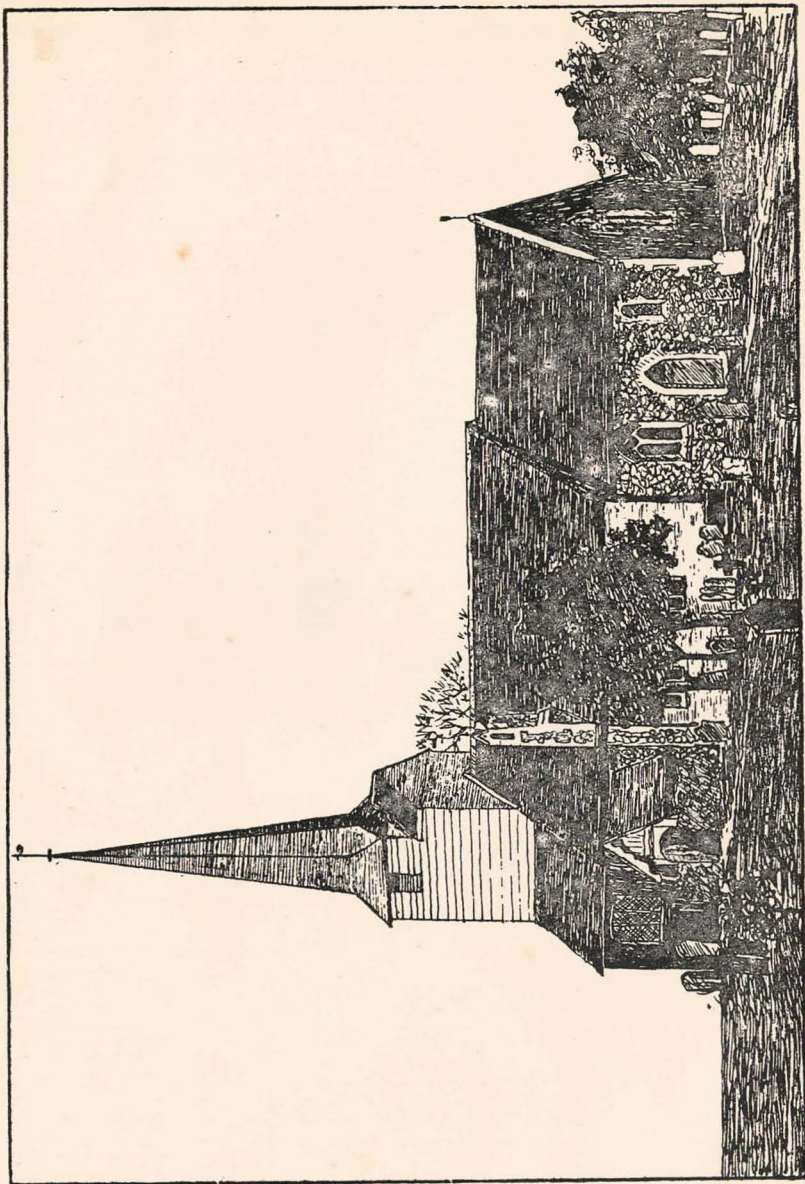
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CONTENTS



		PAGE
Chapter I	THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE	9
Chapter II	MEMORIES OF BYGONE DAYS	15
Chapter III	SOME INTERESTING BUILDINGS	25
Chapter IV	NONCONFORMITY	33
Chapter V	THE VILLAGE OF To-DAY	45





ALL SAINTS' PARISH CHURCH, STOCK

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE

THE Village of Stock is situated on the crest of a range of hills running north-eastward through the county, from Brentwood on the south west to Danbury on the north east. The highest point in the Village is 318 feet above sea level as compared with Danbury (353 feet) and Laindon (385 feet)—two of the highest points in Essex.

Stock lies about 20 miles inland from the North Sea, and the nearest seaside resort is Southend on the Thames Estuary. The village occupies a very healthy position, and the death rate is about 11 per 1,000.

The Village is in the Hundred and Parliamentary Division of Chelmsford, and is situated some six miles from the Cathedral Town, and some $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles from Billericay where is the nearest Railway Station.

The High Street forms part of the main road from Chelmsford to Tilbury—a road which has seen a great deal of history, being probably a track through the forest in pre-Roman times, and a road which bears a considerable amount of traffic to-day, to and from Chelmsford to various places in the south of the county.

The district around here at one time formed part of the great forest of Essex, now only represented by Epping Forest, and there are many acres of woodland surrounding the village. From the air, it still appears to be situated in the midst of densely wooded country.

The scenery around Stock can justly be claimed to be among the most charming in the county, commanding as it does extensive views in almost every direction. It has been claimed by some of the older inhabitants that from certain points in the village it is possible, on a clear day to see the reflection of the sun on the Crystal Palace, but this must be taken *cum grano salis*. Delightful

vistas, however, can be obtained from the meadow known as "Hollilop" and the "Church Fields" as well as from various points along the Mill Road.

The woods around the village also afford the opportunity for enjoyable rambles, and a wanderer from the beaten track may discover some exquisite beauty spots, and 'dells wherein the wild thyme blows' which in spring and summer are veritable "palaces of fairyland."

The soil in this part of the county is somewhat lighter than the surrounding lands, and the subsoil consists of a white sand inter-mixed with gravel. Water is found in abundance at anything from 15 to 45 feet, and is usually of an excellent quality for drinking, but towards the south west of the village runs a layer of stiff black clay, and the water in this part is scarcely fit for human consumption, and one has to go much deeper—about 75-100 feet to obtain an adequate supply.

The district around Stock has always been mainly agricultural and the village is still situated in the midst of farm lands. The principal crops are wheat, oats and barley, whilst potatoes are also grown extensively on some of the farms. At one time hops were grown around this district, but hop-growing has been discontinued now for many years.

Of the very early inhabitants of this district little is known with any certainty, but historians tell us that following on the Paleolithic man and the Neolithic races, came a tribe known as the Cassii. These were semi-civilised people, and some relics of their age have been found in and around the village in the shape of stone axe heads and other rude tools. These Cassii were later conquered and superseded by another tribe known as the Trinobantes, and it is this latter tribe who occupied the county at the time of the coming of the Romans in B.C. 54.

There are many evidences which point to the fact of the British tribes having had an encampment at Stock, and traces of their occupation may still be seen. The centre of the encampment was probably the meadow where the Roman Catholic Cemetery is now situated. About the year 1885, some workmen digging in this meadow, unearthed specimens of Roman urns and vases, and this seems to point to the fact that the Romans succeeded the British in their occupation of this spot.

This meadow is practically the highest point in the village and commands views over a wide stretch of country. Around this meadow the ground falls away sharply on the south and west sides, and there are traces of its having been almost entirely surrounded

by a deep ditch or moat, parts of which are still in existence, and can be seen at various points. It is not unreasonable to suppose that here was a British encampment, and maybe a stronghold of the warrior Queen Boadicea, when the Iceni tribe from Norfolk, joined the Trinobantes in rebellion against the Romans. It is almost certain that the Roman legions passed this way on their marches between the Thames and Camulodonum (Colchester).

There is still some difference of opinion among historians as to the origin of the name "Stock." Apparently the village did not exist, at any rate as a separate locality, until Saxon times, and it is to the Saxons that we owe the name of the village. One opinion is that the Saxon word *stocce* meaning 'wood' was given to this district, but it is more probable that the word was derived from "Stoks" meaning a place within another district. Also the Saxon word for steward was "Hereward", and it is most likely that under the Saxon system of local government a 'Hereward' was appointed to look after the 'Stoks' in "Botulphsburie" as this district was called. Hence we have three of our modern names—"Stoks" (Stock), "Hereward" (Harvard), and "Botulphsburie" (Buttsbury), the last named being the adjoining parish whose lands almost surround the parish of Stock.

There is no more curious survival of past ages than parish boundaries, and it is often difficult to tell where one parish begins and another one ends. Especially is this so with the parishes of Stock and Buttsbury, as the village proper is situated almost equally in both, and some of the houses,—notably the "Cock" public house,—are actually built across the boundary line, portions of the building being in each parish.†

For the same reason it is also difficult to estimate correctly the population of the village, as this again is divided between the two parishes. The following figures will show that while the population of Stock remains very much the same as it has been for the past century or more, the population of Buttsbury has shewn a marked increase during the last two decades. This increase is largely accounted for by the fact that a considerable portion of Buttsbury parish lies in close proximity to Billericay. As far as Stock is concerned, however, it is probable that the population has varied little during the last 300 years.

		Stock		Buttsbury
1801	.. ..	503	.. ..	385
1811	.. ..	532	.. ..	474

† In 1934 the Essex County Council obtained powers to amalgamate Stock and Buttsbury for civil purposes consequent upon the formation of the Urban District of Billericay.

1821	..	..	610	..	..	522
1831	..	..	619	..	..	515
1841	..	..	605	..	..	521
1851	..	..	702	..	..	506
1861	..	..	657	..	..	531
1871	..	..	632	..	..	487
1881	..	..	565	..	..	452
1891	..	..	546	..	..	507
1901	..	..	540	..	..	532
1911	..	..	587	..	..	697
1921	..	..	669	..	..	863
1931	..	..	713	..	..	1709

The district played a prominent part in the peasants' rising of 1381, and many of the 'rebels' were recruited from the Stock neighbourhood. It was in the Norsey Woods, situated between Stock and Billericay, that the last stand of the unfortunate and disappointed villeins was made against the soldiers of Richard II, and where, as Stow says: "A multitude have fortified themselves, with ditches and carriages." The poor and ill-armed peasants were but little match for the trained horse soldiers of Richard, however, and they were utterly routed with great slaughter, one historian giving the number of slain as high as 500. An extract from the 'Transactions of the Essex Archeological Society' Vol. III, reads as follows:—

"Inquisitions at Chelmsford: Thursday after S.S. Peter and Paul, 5th Richard II, before Robert Tresilian and his associates:— It was presented that numerous persons of Fobbyng, Stanford, Mokkyng and Horndon, with a certain weaver dwelling in Billericay and one John Newman of Rawreth, a common thief, and many other men of the villages of Rammesden, Warle, *Herwardstok*, Gyngge, Bokkyng, Goldhangre, Reynham, Welde, Benyngton, and Gyngatte-stone, rose up against the King, and gathered to them many malefactors and enemies of the King, and made congregations at Brentwoode on Thursday after Ascension, 4th, Richard II, and made assault on John Gildesbrugh, John Bampton and other Justices of the Peace with bows and arrows, procuring them to kill them, and afterwards on Monday the morrow of Holy Trinity they went to Cressyng and broke and rooted up the Prior's house and took away the Prior's goods."

From this it would seem that righteous as the cause was at the beginning it afforded an opportunity for violence and robbery on the part of many 'undesirables' of the district.

As previously mentioned, Stock was at one time a hamlet of Buttsbury, which may account for the rather curious fact that Stock possesses no manors, while in the adjoining parish of Buttsbury there are seven. The following extract from "Wright's History of Essex", gives some interesting details of these old manors.

"Buttsbury is sometimes called Ginges Joiberd (and Joiberd is undoubtedly the name of a family). In Domesday Book it is written Cinga, and in other records Bottesbury, Botulnesbury, Butterbury, Botulbespyrie and Botulfespyrie. The Manor House fronts the road from Stock to Billericay. A Saxon proprietor of the name of Bond held these lands before the Conquest, and they are entered in the Domesday Book by the name of Cinga as the property of Henry de Ferrers. No less than Seven Manors are enumerated in this parish, but some of them extend into and almost comprehend the whole parish of Stock.

Blunts is a Manor that took its name from a family who held it in the reign of Henry III, when Tobert de Blund being attainted for joining with Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester and other barons, his possessions here were forfeited, yet they were held by Thomas le Blonte of the same family under the Ferrers as lords paramount in the time of Richard II. From the descendants of the Ferrers this manor came by purchase to Paul Bayning, Esq., who was Sheriff of Essex in 1593. His son Paul was created a Baronet in 1611, a Baron in 1627, and soon after Viscount. He died in 1629, very rich. Paul, his son was born in 1616 and died in 1638 leaving only two daughters Anne and Penelope. The first married to Aubrey de Vere, Earl of Oxford, to whom she brought this and other very large estates, but having no issue the Estate came to her Aunt, Elizabeth Bayning her father's younger sister, who marrying Francis Lennard, Lord Dacre, had by him two sons, Thomas, advanced to the title of Earl of Sussex, and Henry Lennard to whom she left the fourth part of the Bayning Estate in which was included Blunts Hall and that part which lay in Stock. He left three daughters, Margaret, Catherine and Anne, who in 1745 sold Blunts Hall and its appurtenances to Lady Comyns widow of Sir J. Comyns of Hylands. Lord Viscount Bayning compounded with the Crown for disafforesting of the Manor of Blunts in Buttsbury and Stock, containing 200 acres, at that time rented at £111 per annum. The mansion house is on the right hand side of the road leading from Stock to Billericay.

Frestling or Thurstling is the next manor. The house is in the fields about halfway between Stock and Margaretting. It passed through a succession of proprietors after the disposal of it by the Crown, till it came to the Petre family.

Impey Hall stands about a mile south east from Buttsbury Church. The Manor to which it belongs was part of the endowment of the nunnery of Ikelton in Cambridgeshire, founded by Aubrey de Vere, Earl of Oxford in 1140. It was given by Henry VIII to the Bishop of Ely, but has since come to the Petre family.

Crondon Hamlet, Park and Manor are reckoned to belong to Buttsbury, yet it is in fact a part of Orsett parish, to which it is rated and pays tithes. It appears to have belonged to the see of London, but had come to the Crown in Henry VIII's time and was sold to Sir William Petre.

Whites and Ramseys, or Ramsey Tyrell, are two Manors that have from a remote period belonged to the ancient family of Tyrell. The mansion house is about halfway between Buttsbury and Stock.

There is also the Manor of Buckwynes, etc."

Every parish furnishes some quaint and illuminating field names, and Stock is no exception in this respect. It is curious,

however, that in the Waller collection of "Essex Field Names" there are four parishes in the Chelmsford Hundred which furnish few or no field names, among these four being Stock and Buttsbury. That this should be so seems unfortunate as there are certainly names in plenty to be collected. The following are a few field names in and around Stock :—

" Cracknells "	" Digby Field "	" Gt. Pond Piece "
" Bushey Piece "	" The Gate & Stile "	" Shed Field "
" The Thrift "	" Coarse Piece "	" Marigolds "
" Oakleys "	" Hollilop "	" Coxhill Field "
" The Goss "	" Hanvil Field "	" Great Flacks "
" Barn Field "	" Chapel Pieces "	" Turks Hill Field "
" Eighty-eights "	" Marl Pit Field "	

Some interesting names of farms around the village are as follows :— " Bishops," " Bellmans," " Brocks," " Brookmans," " Brook," " Calves Common," " Greenacre," " Holes Place," " Foxborough," " Steeles" (also known as " Five Chimneys"), " Great and Little Prestons," " Scriveners," and many others almost as interesting.

Some of these fields and farms, have, of course, taken their names from a one-time owner, while others give the idea of their situation or size, and doubtless all of them have some meaning which in the majority of cases, unfortunately, is unknown to-day.

CHAPTER II

MEMORIES OF BYGONE DAYS

THE passing of the years inevitably brings great changes in national and social life, but perhaps no phase has undergone such transformation as our industrial life during the last century. Industries which once were flourishing and which supported a large proportion of our rural populations have now completely passed away, and it is very often only by chance that one learns of their existence at all. A great deal of this change is, of course, due to the advent of mechanical and electrical power, and it would seem sometimes that individual craftsmanship is in danger of being lost entirely in the whirlpool of our mass production system and highly organised factory output. It is gratifying to know, however, that some attempts are being made to revive an interest in our once flourishing rural industries and to stimulate a pride in home craftsmanship.

Among the industries for which Stock and the surrounding district has been noted in the past is brick and tile making, with its allied industry pot-making.

Wright's " History of Essex " says that towards the north-east corner of the parish of Stock the soil is a stiff loam, " which is called by the inhabitants Brick and Pot Earth, because at Buttsbury both articles have been manufactured from this material, and are of a very superior kind." Morant also mentions " that the best bricks of the County are made at Stock and Buttsbury ", and Muilman's History (1770), says " The bricks made here are reputed the best in these parts, and the pots are strong, but of a coarse and ordinary ware."

If Stock has no other claim to fame, it has the distinction of having given its name to that special kind of bricks, which were first made here and are famous the wide world over as " Stock Bricks." They are made with an admixture of ashes for their burning.

There was a brick-works in the Mill Road until about 1900,

and for many years was a very flourishing concern. Within living memory as many as 50 hands were employed there.

The pottery works, of which there were two in the village, disappeared during the early part of the 19th century, but during the 17th and 18th centuries they formed an important feature in the industrial life of the district. There are many references to 'Potters' in the Parish Registers during this period, and there is a large ringer 'gotch' or jug at Braintree Church, which bears an inscription stating that it was made at Stock in 1689 by Richard Youngs.

As far as it has been possible to discover, one pottery stood on the site of the house known as "The Lattices," but the exact location of the other is doubtful, though it was probably somewhere in the vicinity of the houses known as "Brick House" and "Tudor Cottage." Tiles were also made at these works, and an entry in the Churchwardens' disbursements of Ramsden Bellhouse, in November 1756, states that the Church there was repaired with tiles made at Stock.

It is difficult to say just why such important industries should have died out, but both brick and pot making are now nothing but a memory. The last building of any note in the village to be built with locally manufactured bricks was the present Congregational Church.

The district, has, of course, always been largely agricultural, and much corn-milling was at one time carried on here. Morant mentions that there was a mill in 'Stok' belonging to Thos. Tyrell as early as 1476, and there has probably been at least one mill in working order in the village ever since. Early 17th century maps show two mills, and in the 18th century there is evidence of two 'post' mills working, one situated in the garden adjoining the "Jolly Millers" beershop (now the "Bakers Arms"), and the other in the meadow where the present tower Mill now stands.

It is interesting to note that the Post Mill by the "Jolly Millers" was purchased from Mr. George Threadgold, the owner, about 1845 by Mr. William Moss, of Thaxted, who owned the other mill, and built the existing one. A brick base was built with locally manufactured bricks in the present Mill meadow, and the wooden body of the post mill was moved intact across the common which at that time was unenclosed right up to the Mill Meadow (and probably much further). The story is told that during the moving which was carried out by means of a flat wooden trolley drawn by a team of horses, they had to pass over such rough and uneven ground that the miller nearly fainted with apprehension lest the whole structure should overbalance and crash. Fortunately no such catastrophe

occurred, and the mill reached its destination safely. The three mills—two wooden ones and the present brick one—stood together in the same meadow for about 40 years, but the two post mills fell into disrepair, and were finally demolished about 1890. Traces of their foundations may still be seen.

Another industry which should be mentioned is Potash making. There were potash works situated on the Billericay Road towards Ramsden, which were at one time owned by a Mr. Porter. These have disappeared, but they have given the name to the road which is known as "Potash Lane." There was also a "Potash Office" situated on the road to Impey Farm below Brookmans, but it is not known whether potash was actually manufactured there.

The fact that bricks were manufactured locally may perhaps account for the fact that building and especially bricklaying has always been a flourishing trade in the village, employing a considerable number of hands even down to the present day. A few years ago it would have been safe to say that forty per cent of the working population of the district, were engaged in some branch of the building trade. The writer may perhaps be pardoned for mentioning that his family have a certain pride in the fact that its records as a building firm extend back over two centuries.

To obtain some insight into village life in the past there is no more fertile field of study than the Parish Registers. These furnish many intimate and interesting glimpses into the lives of our ancestors, and the following extracts are taken from the Stock Parish Registers as translated by the late Rector (Rev. E. P. Gibson).

Baptisms

1611	21 July	Jane daughter of Thomas Peatlie the younger on the Sabboth Day before that is upon the 21 July "here is set downe the same party."
1625	22 May	Dorothy Pepper, daughter of Bartholomew and Anne, was baptized 22 May by mee Richard Cole Curat de Stock.
1634	1 Jan.	Martha, daughter of Daniel Carrington and of Mary his wife of Butsbury uppon expresse leave from ye Minister (in regard to ye length of way and tediousness of weather) was baptized in Stocke Church.
1640	24 May	Jone, daughter of Richard Bush (of Stock Green) and Marie his wife, on Whitsonday.
1672	18 Nov.	Oakfield, son of Thomas Clay of Blunts-plaine in the parish of Buttsbury.
1677	10 June	William, son of John Grigley of ye towne of Stocke late of Butsbury.

1690 14 Oct. Samuell, son of Edward Phillipe and his wife, being a man growing and ready to marry, his father being an Anabaptist, and said Samuell was baptized in Stock Church with a great deal of willingnesse.

Marriages

1618 21 Sept. John Palmar, potter, son of John Palmar, potter, and Johan his wife, all of Stock Harvard, and Agnes Moncke of Writtle.
1619 9 Jan. Garrett of Stock to Neal of Orsett Hamlet as they call it.

On Nov. 23rd, 1626, there were three couples married together.

An indication of the unsettled times of the Commonwealth, is given in the next entry :—

1655 12 Feb. Thomas Numan unto Grace Godsall, both of Buttsbury and the same day married againe by Mr. Martin Simpson, Rector of Stocke.
1660 16 July Roger Hares unto Sarah Carrington both of Much Baddow, in Stocke Church.
1664 31 Oct. John Hills and Alice Leoanard, both of South Hanningfield were married in Stocke Church by reason of a greatt floud.

A note here says :—“ Edward Phillippes was excommunicated May ye 22nd, 1664.”

(I understand that this excommunication was for holding unauthorised Services or “ Conventicles ” in his private house at Stock).

Burials

1598 9 April The wife of Tytus Bull.
1598 20 April Tytus Bull.
1599 15 Jan. Mother Tabour.
1624 15 July Thomas Bramstem son of John Bramstem (sergeant of ye Lawe dwellinge at Margeting).
1625 30 July Titus Witestocke of Gt. Burstead who died by a fall from an house (Mr. Nevil's house).
1632 2 June Jone Bundocke, an old widdow.
1635 20 April Will. son of Charles Newman and Anna, being casually drowned on ye 16th day of Aprill in ye night was tooke up and buried.
1636 25 April Anne Sells a maide who dwelte at ye Cocke, being casually drowned.
1636 26 Aug. Sara Gwyatt, widdowe verie aged.
1637 3 Aug. William Newball (a verie old man).

1638 17 Sep. John Bromley an antient yoman of Orzed hamlett.
1638 3 Feb. William Hankin the Elder (a pottmaker).
1638 3 Jan. Ellen Newball, widdowe (a verie old woman).
1638 10 Feb. Thomas Essetts (a Tayler and a singleman).
1639 21 June Thomas a nurse child at ye Widdowe Brownes on Tye Common.
1639 10 July Thomas Hawley a potter (having bin a long time sick and lame) on Wednesday.
1639 19 Feb. Charles Newman (a carpenter and Innholder of the Cock in Buttesburie) on Ashwednesday.
1639 26 May Marie Gower a young maiden (and a stranger) that died at the house of Joseph Gower in Orzedd hamlett was (by permission and upon intreatie) buried in the Churchyard of Harvard Stock.
1640 10 Aug. Phillip Allison (the child of Alice Holland) brake his neck out of a carte on Monday.
1640 13 Jan. Anne Hawley (an antient maiden and the daughter of Thomas Hawley a pottmaker) on Wednesday.
1641 8 April Henry Spiltimber (an old Batcheller being an almesman of Harvard Stock) on Thursday.
1642 7 May Elizabeth the daughter of Thomas Wood (an anabaptisticall and factious Separatist) and Eleanor his wife (the grave being ready made) was (by the companie that came with the child) interred and layed into the ground before the minister came and without praies; or the right of Christian burial according to the Order of the Church of England, on Saturday.

[Curiously enough there was also an orthodox funeral on that day, for the next entry reads as follows] :—

1642 7 May John Silnester the elder (under Bailief for the libertie of Harvard Stock & Buttsburie) departed this mortall life on Thursday, May 5, 1642. And was burind on Satterday.
1642 14 Feb. Humphrey Perryn (a helper of the Potters).
1655 4 June Edward, son of — Moore, a nursechild, nursed at the Lodge in the Parke, was buried in Stocke Chancell.
1655 4 March Mr. William Clovill dying at Holes was, by his own appointment, buried in Westhaningfield Chancell.
1656 3 Feb. Richard Bywatt, an antient Potter.
1659 18 Feb. Paull Negus, curate of Buttsbury.
1661 15 Feb. Ralph Boyer, and it thundered at the same time.

Two Notes here read as follows :—

1665 9 April Elizabeth Perrin was excommunicated.

1666 7 Oct. Thomas Allen & Robert Bundocke, both Churchwardens were excommunicated.

No reason is given for these excommunications, but doubtless it was an aftermath of the Commonwealth period, and in 1668, there is the following :—

1668 2 Nov. Elizabeth Perrin, being excommunicated was buried upon the Common.

1669 18 Oct. A pore woman, a stranger, dying at Ignatius Stoakes in Butsbury.

1672 15 Feb. John Reade, blacksmith (ye Lord Peter his Bailiffe of the towne of Stocke).

1673 24 Aug. John Collins (an ancient man) the ffather of John Collins now ffarmer of Bellmans was buried here in Stock Churchyard.

1673 20 Oct. A travelling woman unknown to any here, who dyed in a barne belonging to Gt. Blunts, here in our Churchyard of Stock.

The next entries are very interesting in view of the excommunications of 1666.

1674 3 Aug. Thomas Allen Jr. (a Master Potter).
1674 4 Aug. Robert Bundoock (a Master Potter).
1674 7 Dec. Thomas Hankin (a Master Potter).

Truly a loss to the Pottery trade in one year !.

1676 4 July William Mott a very ancient man who lived in Stock but in the Parish of Buttsbury was buried under the Chancell Wall on the North side and East end of Chancel.

1676 23 Aug. Richard Barnes, a citizen of London, dwelling (as he sayd) in the Minories, taken sick in travell, dyed in the high way neare ye house called The Rose and was buried at the Parishes charge.

1693 20 Nov. A stranger who died at the Cock, being a poor man was buried by the Constables.

1697 12 Aug. John Adkins, being Church Clarke, to my great losse for none capable in the parish of it.

Doubtless the entries of to-day will be as interesting to the curious minded of future generations as the above extracts are to us.

In the north east corner of the parish there was formerly a portion of ground which belonged to the parish of Orsett. It was really part of the property of the Priory at Orsett, and was held by them until the dissolution of the Monastries by Henry VIII, when

it was apparently transferred to the civil parish of Orsett. It remained technically in this parish until about 50 years ago, when by an Order in Council it was transferred to Stock.

Adjacent to Orsett Hamlet, and partly in the parish of Stock is the old farm of "Crondon Park" which was formerly a Manor. This also was apparently seized by Henry VIII, but was sold by him to Sir William Petre. Owing chiefly to the generosity of the Petre family, a Roman Catholic Mission was established here under the control of the Jesuit Society, and was secretly served for many years during the seventeenth century by the Jesuit Fathers. The occupants of the farm at this time were the family of Mason, who were staunch supporters of the Roman Catholic faith. In the Stock Parish Registers there is an entry recording the burial of one "Richard Billing from Crondon Park, a Romish Priest, on March 3rd, 1769." It would appear therefore that the Roman Catholic Mission was still in existence there at that time. Two interesting survivals of those days are the names "Chapel Pieces" and "Great Pond Piece" given to two meadows adjoining Crondon Park.

During the seventeenth century when the country was torn by strife between King and Parliament this district bore its share in the troubles, and among others changes which were made at this time was one at least which must have been beneficial. This was the uniting of the two parishes of Stock and Buttsbury into one parish, both for civil and ecclesiastical purposes. The living of the Established Church was sequestered, and under the "Classes" of the Presbyterian regime the parishes were joined together, and a Thomas Calfe was appointed as 'Elder'.

Oliver Cromwell was closely associated with Essex (three of his children were educated at Felsted) and one historian describes the county as a "hot-bed of Puritanism." At any rate it is quite probable that during the Civil War, especially at the time of the siege of Colchester, this district saw a good deal of the Parliamentary Army. It is said that when Charles I was beheaded the news of his execution was sent through the county by means of a chain of bonfires lighted on the hilltops. A beacon was lighted at Brentwood. It is stated, and another at Danbury, and one wonders if one was also lit at Stock mid-way between the two and in view of both. It is very probable that this was the case, but there is no certain information on this point.

An account of bygone days would be incomplete without some mention of the appalling state of the roads and the great difficulties of transport and travel. Each district was supposed to be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the King's Highway within its own borders, but there were long stretches where little or nothing

was ever done in the way of road repairs. The old milestone standing in the centre of the village, opposite the Post Office, has doubtless witnessed many interesting scenes, and the passing of many distinguished travellers for the road through Stock is the most direct one from Chelmsford and Colchester to the Thames at Tilbury.

One historian writing of this particular road, speaks of it as being "in places a narrow lane with ruts often 12-15 inches deep." It was no uncommon sight to see anything from 15 to 20 waggons all stuck in the mud, only to be dragged out by the united efforts of all the horses harnessed to one waggon at a time. The trees and hedges overhung the road on either side, in some places meeting overhead so that the sun could scarcely ever penetrate. Footpads and highwaymen abounded, and Galleywood Common, between Stock and Chelmsford, was a favourite place for 'holding up' belated travellers. Farmers journeying between Chelmsford and the outlying villages during the 17th and 18th centuries usually travelled in companies for their greater protection. The most famous of highwaymen, Dick Turpin, is reported to have been very active in this neighbourhood, and to have lived at one time between Stock and Wickford.

Of course the only means of transport was, first by pack-horse, and later by coach and waggon, and in winter the roads were often impassable for considerable periods.

Even down to within living memory it has been known for Stock to be practically isolated from the outer world, at least on two sides. The river Wid would overflow its banks between Stock and Ingatestone; the Wash at the foot of Stock Hills would also be in flood to a depth, sometimes, of 5 feet; Well (or Small Gains) Lane would be impassable, and Margaretting would be cut off by the floods at "Whites Bridge." Fortunately the road to Chelmsford was usually traversible.

Owing to the difficulty of reaching the neighbouring towns and shops, the local fairs which were held from time to time were events of much importance and interest. For many years, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and probably long before that) an Annual Fair was held at the "Leather Bottle" a hamlet situated about a mile out of Stock, and adjoining West Hanningfield parish. Here would be various kinds of merchandise for sale, and sports and competitions were also held. The prizes for the various races and competitions were usually articles of food or clothing, and were keenly contested for by the villagers. This Fair, however, fell into disrepute, and latterly was made the occasion for much rowdiness and it was finally suppressed by the authorities about 1870.

A Fair was also held in Stock during Whitsuntide for many

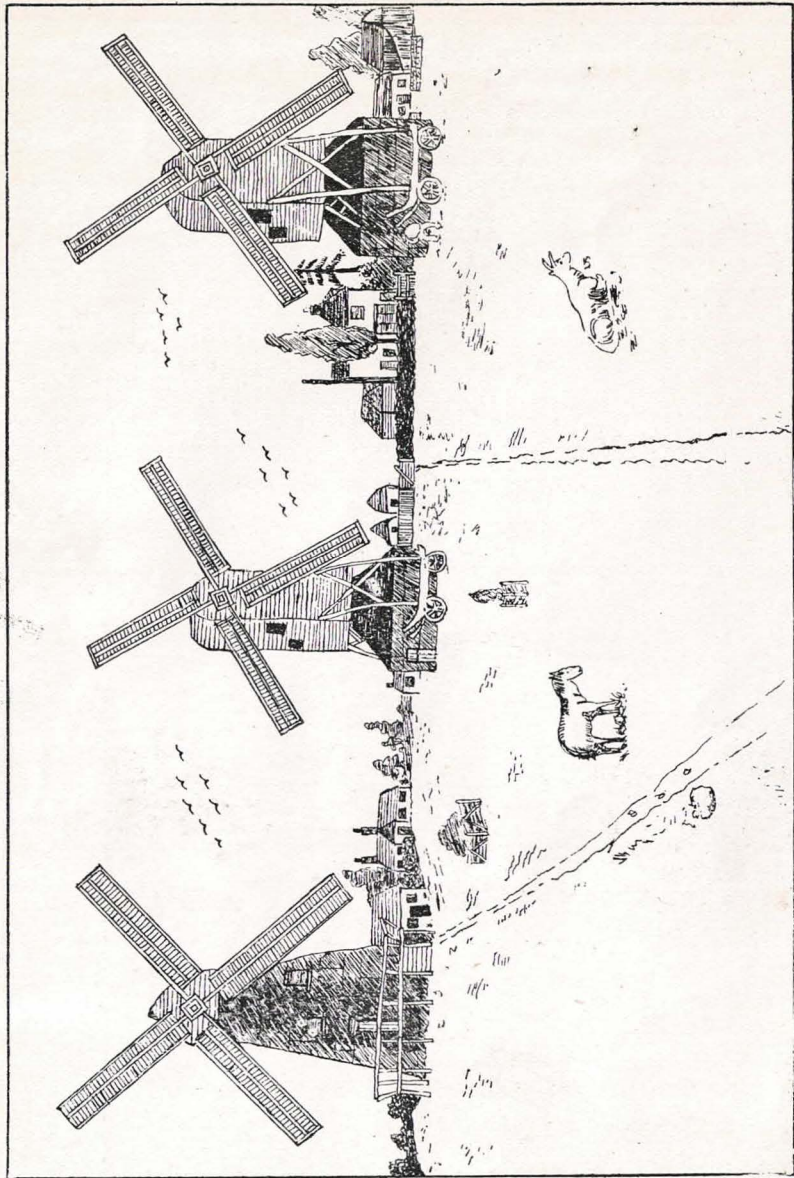
years. Stalls were erected in the streets, and the district was *en fete*, many visitors coming from neighbouring villages. Some old inhabitants can recall the famous "gingerbread men" which were sold on many of the stalls during this fair. A favourite competition at Fair times was 'Walking the Greasy Pole' over the Weir Pond.

At Fair times, and also at intervals during the summer, a great cricket match would be played on the Common, on the same pitch as is used to-day. These matches usually commenced at 11 a.m. and continued with intervals for lunch and tea until 6.30 p.m. Before the present Pavilion was erected there were usually four, and often more large tents erected round the edge of the Common, which was lined to its fullest extent with the carriages of the spectators.

The villagers always took a keen interest in events of National importance, and such occasions as coronations and royal weddings were fitly celebrated with great rejoicings. A notable exception, however, was the marriage of the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) which took place in March, 1863. Preparations had been made for the usual celebrations, but the Rector of Stock refused to countenance any festivities as the marriage took place in Lent. There was much disappointment in the village, but the authority of the Church was unquestioned in those days, and the villagers had to be content with a severe curtailment of their plans. An old newspaper cutting mentions, however, that 'Stock Brass Band' (!) assisted in the celebrations at Billericay.

The important events of the South African War were duly celebrated and the Reliefs of Mafeking and Ladysmith were hailed here as elsewhere throughout the country with great rejoicings. On the occasion of the relief of Mafeking the younger members of the village insisted on lighting a bonfire on the Village Green in the High Street instead of on the Common as was customary, much to the consternation of some of the older inhabitants who feared that their dwellings might be involved in the conflagration. Happily everything passed off safely and no damage to property was done.

No record of the life of the village during the nineteenth century would be complete without some mention of that once small and despised, but now powerful, body The Salvation Army. A Corps was formed at Stock in 1877 and for some years maintained an active existence. Their "barracks" was a building which is still standing and now used as a store shed by a firm of local builders in the High Street. There was much opposition in the early days and the open-air meetings of the Army were often disturbed by the lads of the village who formed a 'skeleton band' of tin trays and boxes and seriously disturbed the meetings. It is interesting to note that one of the early officers stationed at Stock, rose to a position of



THE THREE MILLS AT STOCK (from a contemporary sketch in 1860)



STOCK MILL TO-DAY